

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

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USIA-06 OMB-01 SAM-01 IO-13 SCCT-01 /093 W

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R 131130Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5193

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA POUCH

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMCONSUL PORT SAID POUCH

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY SANA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 9459

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR XF

SUBJECT: ARAB LEAGUE COUNCIL ON LEBANON--JULY 12 SESSION

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REF: CAIRO 9428 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY. AFTER MANY HOURS OF WRANGLING JULY 12, ARAB LEAGUE COUNCIL DECIDED RECONVENE JULY 13 FOLLOWING FAILURE ACHIEVE AGREEMENT ON HOW TO END FIGHTING IN LEBANON. IMMEDIATE SUMMIT AND JOINT ARAB FIGHTING FORCE HAVE BEEN RULED OUT. NEW DRAFTING COMMITTEE IS ENDEAVORING WRITE INSTRUCTIONS TO SYG RIAD TO OBTAIN POLITICAL CEASE-FIRE WHICH, COUNCIL HAS AGREED, MUST PRECEDE INITIATION OF PEACE-KEEPING ACTIVITIES BY THE PRESENT JOINT ARAB FORCE. EGYPT AND OTHERS HAVE AGREED TO PROVIDE TO CURRENT JOINT FORCE HEAVY EQUIPMENT, WHICH WOULD INCREASE ITS ABILITY TO POLICE A CEASE-FIRE. GOE/SARG RELATIONS CONTINUE PUBLICLY AMICABLE. END SUMMARY.

1. LONG ARAB LEAGUE COUNCIL SESSION ON LEBANON JULY 12 IS BEING RECONVENED MORNING JULY 13. RELIABLE ARAB JOURNALIST, WHO SPENT ENTIRE DAY IN ARAB LEAGUE BUILDING, HAS PROVIDED US WITH FOLLOWING ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS.

2. THE TWO SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS WHICH HAD BEEN MUCH BRUITED IN CAIRO OVER WEEKEND WERE IMMEDIATE ARAB SUMMIT AND/OR FORMATION OF ARAB LEAGUE FIGHTING FORCE WHICH WOULD IMPOSE SETTLEMENT ON COMBATANTS. BOTH THESE IDEAS WERE DISAPPROVED. OFFICIAL ARAB LEAGUE SOURCE CONFIRMED THAT FIVE-MAN DRAFTING COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF EGYPT, PLO, SYRIA, TUNISIA AND LEBANON (NOT IRAQ, AS WAS ERRONEOUSLY REPORTED IN LOCAL PRESS) SOUGHT PRODUCE DRAFT WHICH WOULD INCORPORATE THOSE FEW IDEAS WHICH HAVE GAINED GENERAL ACCEPTANCE. LEBANESE REP WAS KARAMI'S CHOICE, I.E., PRESENT AMBASSADOR TO EGYPT MUHAMMAD SABRA. CHIEF THRUST OF COMMITTEE'S EFFORTS IS TO WRITE UP PROPOSAL WHICH WOULD GIVE EXISTING PEACE-KEEPING FORCE MILITARY PUNCH WITH WHICH TO ENFORCE CEASE-FIRE. FAHMY TOLD MEETING IN ADDRESS PUBLISHED IN LOCAL PAPERS THAT EGYPT WOULD BE PREPARED SEND ARMS AND TANKS TO LEBANON FOR THIS PURPOSE. SUCH BEEFED UP PEACE-KEEPING FORCE WOULD, HOWEVER, NOT COME INTO EXISTENCE UNTIL RPT UNTIL POLITICAL EFFORTS HAD ACHIEVED CEASE-FIRE. APPARENTLY KHADDAM HAS BOUGHT THIS IDEA.

3. COMMITTEE DRAFT AS IT EXISTED LAST NIGHT OMITTED ALL MENTION OF THE TRIPARTITE COMMITTEE, WHICH HAD JUST RETURNED FROM LEBANON, AND INSTEAD CONTAINED LANGUAGE INSTRUCTING SYG RIAD TO CONFIDENTIAL

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PROCEED WITH "PARTIES CONCERNED" IN HIS EFFORTS OBTAIN CEASE-FIRE BY POLITICAL MEANS. WE UNDERSTAND RIAD OBJECTED STRONGLY THAT THIS MANDATE WAS TOO VAGUE AND WISHED PRECISE INSTRUCTIONS AS TO WHICH ARE THE "PARTIES CONCERNED." PLO OBJECTED VEHEMENTLY TO DRAFT ON TWO SPECIFIC COUNTS: (A) PLO WANTED DRAFT AMENDED SO AS TO REFER TO NUMBER OF COUNTRIES CONTRIBUTING TO PEACE-KEEPING FORCE (ALGERIA HAS SO FAR DECLINED TO PARTICIPATE); AND (B) PLO WANTED EXISTING TRIPARTITE COMMITTEE TO BE MENTIONED IN DRAFT

AND ALSO TO BE EXPANDED TO INCLUDE ALGERIA, SAUDI ARABIA AND EGYPT. THESE THREE COUNTRIES REPORTEDLY FIRMLY DECLINED.

4. NEEDLESS TO SAY, PLO WAS AMONG MOST ACTIVE DELEGATIONS. PLO CAIRO OFFICE HEAD SURANI WAS SITTING AT TABLE, BUT IT WAS FATAH'S CAIRO OFFICE HEAD RIBHI AWADH WHO WAS APPARENTLY MOST ACTIVE. KHALID AL-HASAN SAT IN NEXT ROOM, WHERE HE WAS CONSULTED BY PLO DEL MEMBERS FROM TIME TO TIME. AS ADDRESSEES AWARE, KHALID AND RIBHI AWADH ARE AMONG THOSE FATAH LEADERS WHO ARE PARTICULARLY CLOSE TO ARAFAT. KHADLID'S SELF IMPOSED EXILE IN KUWAIT IS UNDERSTOOD HERE NOT TO HAVE BEEN INTENDED SIGNAL ANY PERSONAL RUPTURE WITH ARAFAT.

5. LOCAL PRESS GIVES CHIEF PROMINENCE TO EGYPTIAN ANNOUNCEMENT OF READINESS SEND MATERIEL (THOUGH NOT TROOPS) TO PUT TEETH IN PEACE-KEEPING FORCE. FEATURE PICTURES SHOW FAHMY TALKING EARNESTLY TO KHADDAM. SIGNAL SEEMS TO BE THAT GOE HAS DECIDED MAINTAIN ITS POSTURE OF "RECONCILIATION" WITH SYRIA, ESPECIALLY SINCE FAHMY IS QUOTED AS TELLING COUNCIL THAT PLO REP'S REFERENCES TO SYRIAN LIQUIDATION OF PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE SHOULD BE DISCUSSED FRANKLY AND AT LARGER MEETING. EGYPT IS WILLING PROPOSE LIMITED MEETING OF NUMBER OF ARAB FONMINS FOR THIS PURPOSE, BUT AIM OF PROPOSED MEETING WOULD "NOT BE TO PUT ANYONE ON TRIAL, BUT TO MOVE TOWARD SOUND SOLUTION." KHADDAM IS QUOTED BY FAHMY AS SAYING "WE ARE TIRED...WE WANT TO GET OUT OF THE SWAMP, SINCE THE COST IS HEAVY." FAHMY REPORTEDLY ADDED: "WE SHOULD HELP SYRIA GET OUT. WE WANT TO HELP. WE WANT A SOLUTION..." FAHMY IS ALSO SOURCED AS HAVING SAID FRANJIYA HIMSELF HAD REQUESTED THAT PEACE-KEEPING FORCE BE "REENFORCED."

6. GUMHURIYYA, ALONE AMONG CAIRO NEWSPAPERS, "LEARNED" THAT SAUDI FONMIN HAD ACHIEVED DRAFT AGREEMENT BETWEEN SYRIA AND PALESTINIANS WHICH COULD HAVE SERVED AS BASIS FOR CEASE-FIRE. LIBYA, HOWEVER, CONFIDENTIAL

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"DYNAMITED" THIS AGREEMENT WHEN JALLUD TOLD PALESTINIANS THERE IS SYRIAN-EGYPTIAN-SAUDI PLOT AGAINST THE PALESTINIANS. REPORTEDLY KHADDAM REFERRED TO THIS DRAFT AGREEMENT DURING COUNCIL MEETING AND WAS PROMPTLY ATTACKED, ACCORDING TO GUMHURIYYA, BY LIBYAN DEL DURDA.

7. ALL IN ALL, WE UNDERSTAND JULY 12 SESSION WAS DISTINGUISHED BY INABILITY TO AGREE ON ANY SIGNIFICANT STEP TOWARD ENDING THE FIGHTING. AS OF NOW, MORNING OF JULY 13, COUNCIL IS FOCUSING ITS EFFORTS ON HOW TO REENFORCE PRESENT PEACE-KEEPING GROUP, BUT IT MUST BE STRESSED THAT AGREEMENT HAS BEEN REACHED THAT PEACE-KEEPING UNITS WILL NOT RPT NOT BEGIN THEIR WORK UNTIL CEASE-FIRE HAS BEEN ACHIEVED. PRELIMINARY VIEW EXPRESSED TO US BY JOURNALIST ONE HOUR AFTER JULY 13 MEETING CONVENED WAS THAT FIVE MAN DRAFTING COMMITTEE WAS ON

VERGE OF TOTAL FAILURE.

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